

# The End of an Era

*c. ross hume was tradition personified  
and his life story is a history of o.u.*

By CONNIE BURKE

**B**ACK when it all began, there was a prairie, a building and a man.

That prairie was Oklahoma Territory; the building was the University, and the man was the late C. Ross Hume, one of the first two graduates of O.U.

When Hume graduated in 1898 in a two-member senior class, he and the late Roy P. Stoops received the first bachelor of arts degrees ever awarded in Oklahoma. But this "first" was only one in a string of many "firsts" for Hume.

In those early years before statehood, O.U. was busy building tradition for itself. The University had been established in 1892 as a tuition-free coeducational school with a faculty of four—David Ross Boyd, president; W. N. Rice, F. S. E. Amos and E. C. DeBarr. Until the first building was constructed in 1893, classes were held in downtown Norman, and the choice of subjects was slim.

As freshmen, Hume and his eight classmates initiated many of the early organizations and traditions now in existence.

The building of the Big Red football team was started in 1895 when John A. Harts organized a squad from students and Norman residents.

In a 1941 interview Harts said:

"I proceeded to organize football, but to my consternation I could find no one, with the exception of possibly one, who had ever seen a football, let alone a football game . . . We had but one team in which I could put any dependence.

"Many problems confronted us; the most important

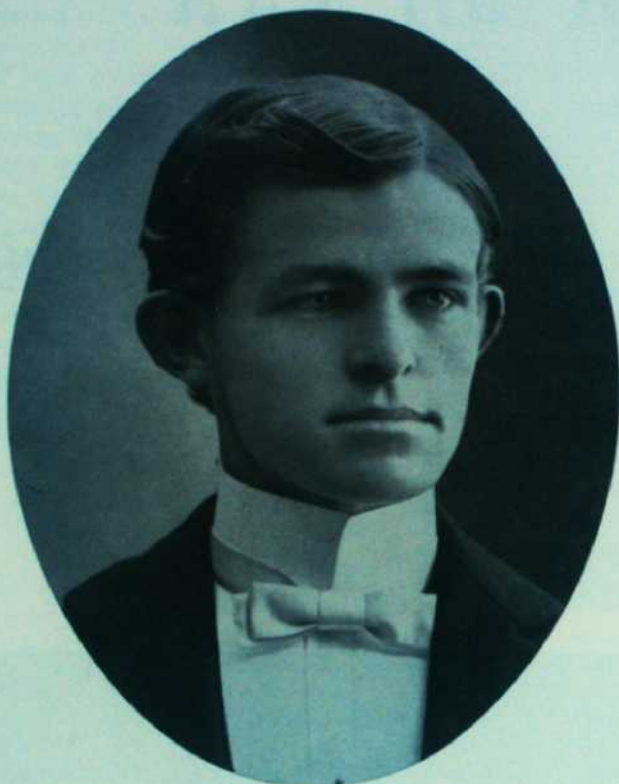


Hume, left, is shown with his 1898 graduation classmate, the late Roy P. Stoops.

continued



*hume's college career was dotted  
by a series of university 'firsts'*



Senior Hume in 1898



The Big Four Quartette was the campus rage in '98. Hume, far right, sang bass.



was lack of capital. We had only one football, in fact, when we put in a substitute, we had to wait until the substitute changed clothes with the regular player, because we only had 12 suits, and we laid out our own football ground. . . .

"As our first game progressed with the High School team of Oklahoma City, who had been quite well trained for a couple of years, I saw to my consternation that the University boys were particularly anxious not to hurt any of the High School team, who were as large or larger than the University Team. As I had to continue changing the team for my substitutes, the team continued to become less aggressive. In fact the High School boys of Oklahoma City had very few obstacles in their way, and the game finished 64-0. . . ."

In a letter to his grandson Hume told his version of O.U. football when he was quarterbacking.

"In the fall of 1895, John A. Harts came to Norman from Southwest Kansas College at Winfield, Kansas, where he had played football previously. He was enrolled as a student, taught some private elocution pupils, and coached the first team. (About 10 students) roomed at the Old Victoria Hotel on West Main Street in Nor-





The first O.U. football team to be photographed was actually the school's second squad. Hume refereed. Pictured are (left to right) first row, Alfred McAtee, Elmo Rickey, John Prickett, Gordon Hoffing, Frank Taylor, Harvey Short, Ray Hume; second row, Ross Hume, C. C. Roberts, H. T. Burson, Paul Mackey, Harry Ford.



These men had dreams of a great educational institution. Here the first faculty poses outside the Administration Building in early campus days. They were, left to right, W. N. Rice, President David Ross Boyd, F. S. E. Amos and E. C. DeBarr.

man . . . No one but Harts had ever seen a football game, and our rooms on third floor were football headquarters . . . The first two seasons might be called prehistoric football, for it was so primitive that you might say there was no organization. . . ."

School spirit at campus events was at a low ebb, so a group of students worked out an official school yell and colors. At sports events and oratorical contests 186 students waved their crimson and cream banners and yelled:

*Hi Rickety Hoopty Do,  
Terragahoo, Hullabuloo,  
Uni, Uni, Uni, U.*

This must have helped, because in 1896 the University won its first game.

Turning to other fields Hume was scorekeeper at the first school baseball game and was exchange editor of the first student newspaper the *Umpire*. As a junior he played on the first winning football team, was a member of the first male quartet and played a role in the first drama production, "Queen Esther."

In his senior year Hume became a charter member of O.U.'s first social fraternity, Eta Kappa Nu, was a mem-

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In Hume's day University Boulevard posed no parking problems, as this photograph so eloquently shows. But bicycles were problems then, also.

## THE END OF AN ERA continued

ber of the first glee club and went on the first chorus tour. In 1900 he received the school's first master of arts degree.

Hume was proud of his position as one of the first O.U. graduates, and he was intensely interested in preserving the historical aspects of the University.

In 1916 he wrote: "During odd moments of the last few weeks I have been preparing an account of University activities as I knew them, and if the occasion ever arises I shall tell them; but if not I shall keep them as reminiscences to be handed down after I am gone . . . A lot of these early happenings are going to be warped until the truth is never known, unless some one has the nerve to nail the lies when he sees them. . . ."

His interest in campus tradition began to take form in 1899 when he and four other men formed the O.U. Alumni Association. Hume served as the first secretary of the organization and in 1909 served as president. During the years he remained active in the work of the group and was honored during numerous Homecoming celebrations.

Of the organization he said: "In June, 1899, I began work towards a master's degree. Lawrence W. Cole, Jesse L. Hefley and Roscoe S. Helvie, the three who re-

ceived bachelor's degrees that spring, and I with Roy P. Stoops in absentia, organized the association on commencement afternoon with the election of Cole as president, Helvie as treasurer, Hefley as the next orator, and me as secretary. Hefley and I drafted the constitution, and I purchased a record book in which early graduates left their autographs . . . The membership was limited then to those who received college degrees, so we ignored pharmacists and music graduates."

Not only was Hume a pioneer Sooner, he was also one of the first pioneer residents of Caddo county. On December 31, 1890, he moved from Wood County, Ohio, to Anadarko where his father had been appointed government physician.

After completing his graduate work at O.U., Hume took a law degree at the University of Kansas. In 1904 he returned to Anadarko where he practiced law for many years. There he became vitally interested in Indian affairs and local history and spent much time compiling records of the early years of Oklahoma.

In 1907 he married Verne Gossard, who died in 1941. Seven years later a chance meeting with a childhood friend, Mrs. Viola Davis, resulted in their marriage.

The O.U. tradition lingered in the Hume family. Second generation graduates include Ross Goddard Hume, '29ba, '31Law; Dorothy Hume Hammond, '34ba, '37Law, and Elizabeth Hume Black, '36ba.

During the summer of 1959 Hume gave many of his personal papers and books to Bizzell Memorial Library. His gift included over 10,000 pieces of correspondence and personal papers dating from 1801, numerous pictures of early days at the University and several hundred books. Many of the books were on Indian and southwest history and about 100 of them were rare books of interest to collectors.

C. Ross Hume—82-year-old alumnus, initiator, perpetuator, office-holder, teacher—died November 26, 1960, in Anadarko. Through the years, the interests of the University of Oklahoma were of primary importance in his life. He believed firmly in the worth of O.U. as an educational institution and he once said:

"During the first fifty years of the University the presidents were Boyd, Evans, Buchanan, Brooks, Bizzell and Brandt, and with Dr. Cross the C's are taking over, and if they do as well, it will be a long time before we have a president beginning with W or Y."